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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. On 9 December 1998, the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/126, in which it noted with concern that, despite all the efforts deployed so far by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and others, the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa, especially in the West African and Great Lakes regions and in the Horn of Africa, remained precarious.

2. The General Assembly called upon the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other concerned entities to intensify protection activities by, *inter alia*, supporting the efforts of African Governments through appropriate capacity-building activities and by providing the necessary assistance to accelerate the enactment or amendment and implementation of legislation relating to refugees, appealed to Governments, the United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international community to create conditions to facilitate the voluntary return in safety and with dignity and the early rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees; and appealed to the international community to respond positively, in the spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing, to the third-country resettlement requests of African refugees.

3. The General Assembly also requested all Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to pay particular attention to meeting the special needs of refugee women and children and displaced persons, including those with special protection needs; called upon UNHCR to make renewed efforts to ensure that the rights, needs and dignity of elderly refugees were fully respected; and called upon the Secretary-General, UNHCR and intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations, in conjunction with States, to increase the capacity for coordination and delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance and disaster relief in respect of asylum, repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, including refugees in urban areas.

4. The present report is submitted pursuant to the General Assembly's request for a comprehensive report on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa to it at its fifty-fourth session taking fully into account the efforts expended by countries of asylum.

II. Action taken to implement General Assembly resolution 53/126

A. Overview

5. Some 15 African countries are currently embroiled in armed conflict, with negative effects on the efforts of Governments to foster stability and economic development for their peoples. Internal as well as external displacement of hundreds of thousands of individuals, many of them innocent civilian women and children, continue to occur. The African continent currently counts some 6 million persons of concern to UNHCR, namely, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees. Most displacements have resulted from situations of poverty or conflict or a combination of both. The main refugee groups caused by recent crises continue to be over half a million Sierra Leoneans in West Africa, 280,000 Burundians in the United Republic of Tanzania and 180,000 Congolese who have fled the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to various countries. Movements have also occurred from the Republic of the Congo to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to Gabon. Owing to security problems affecting major returnee areas, the Liberian repatriation programme was interrupted and the planned repatriation of the 250,000 was put on hold.

6. There are also older, unresolved conflict situations that produced refugees many years ago: more than 370,000 Sudanese are still refugees in Ethiopia and Uganda; 165,000 Saharawi refugees are still in camps in Algeria and other countries; and there are 150,000 Angolan refugees, mostly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Tens of thousands of the latter were new arrivals fleeing fresh fighting in their country. In both Angola and the Sudan, as well as in war-torn areas on the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia, there are also tens of thousands of internally displaced people. In Liberia, where 280,000 refugees have returned home, there were hopes of finishing the repatriation of the remaining quarter of a million by mid-2000, provided conditions are safe.

7. Elsewhere, some situations have given signs of solution. Uppermost among them was Sierra Leone, where the Lomé Peace Agreement (S/1999/777, annex) offers hopes for a settlement. The end of the civil war in that country could bring a positive solution to the worst current refugee problem in Africa. Some 10 per cent of the entire population of Sierra Leone has fled violence and fighting in various waves in the past few years. Most of them took

refuge in Guinea and Liberia, which generously provided asylum despite their limited resources.

8. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, too, there were now hopes of peace. The signing of the Lusaka Agreement by all parties concerned is a welcome development that needs strong international support to allow its full implementation and to prevent further movements of population. In the meantime, UNHCR provides assistance to some 700,000 displaced persons in accessible areas inside the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while another group of over 180,000 refugees are assisted in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

9. Another pressing issue is that of Rwandan refugees who have not yet returned after fleeing their country in the aftermath of genocide. Large groups remain in the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is important for UNHCR to be given access to those requesting repatriation, to enable the Office to resume support for Rwandan refugees still in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwandan refugees in the Republic of the Congo are also in need of assistance and discussions are under way to address their needs.

10. Prospects for Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania, on the other hand, seemed less promising. Pending a positive outcome to peace talks in Arusha, refugee repatriation movements were limited to a few individuals per day. Other situations of conflict and displacement offering little hope for early solutions included the Angolan conflict, which continues to push thousands of people to flee their homes. The war in southern Sudan — one of the oldest and most violent conflicts in the world — also continued to produce untold suffering. Another situation warranting attention was the civil war in the Republic of the Congo. Thousands of inhabitants have been compelled to flee in recent months and are living in conditions of great precarity.

11. Even in situations where peace is secured, there remains the need for measures that would consolidate peace after fighting has ceased for the benefit of those returning to their homes. This helps narrow the dangerous gap between the provision of humanitarian assistance and that of longer-term development cooperation. A striking example of this need is to be found in Rwanda, where returnees make up some 25 per cent of the entire population.

B. Regional overviews

12. The regional overviews that follow focus on main developments since the last report to the General Assembly (A/53/328), and mention major contributions from various agencies of the United Nations system that complement the work of UNHCR.

1. Great Lakes

13. The situation in the Great Lakes region is characterized by continued volatility, with hopes for solutions followed by setbacks, often engendering new waves of population movements. As of June 1999, the United Republic of Tanzania was accommodating the largest number of refugees, with almost 280,000 Burundian, 110,000 Congolese and 5,000 Rwandan refugees in camps. Hopes pinned on the Arusha peace process were dashed by the upsurge of rebel attacks in Burundi in areas previously considered safe, creating a new refugee movement that outnumbered the returns. By June, the increasing number of Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania was putting a strain on reception and transport facilities. Meanwhile continued arrivals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo were stretching the capacity of existing camps. With little prospect of rapid solutions for either of those groups, care and maintenance assistance continued to be provided by UNHCR.

14. In Burundi, the optimism that accompanied the lifting of regional sanctions in January 1999 and improved relations between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania gave way to disappointment as insecurity spread to provinces bordering Tanzania. The return movements dwindled (only 6,000 between January and June), while departures increased. Efforts focused once more on protection and life-sustaining activities, while programmes with a longer-term perspective of facilitating reintegration of returnees were cut back.

15. As a result of the conflict in the Republic of the Congo, a continuous influx of refugees arrived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, most of them in extremely poor condition and severely undernourished. The lack of access to refugees due to the particularly complex situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the prevailing insecurity continues to be of major concern. Arrangements for temporary relief assistance were made, as the vast majority are keen to repatriate as quickly as possible. Given the positive signs of a rapid denouement of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a result of the Lusaka Agreement, UNHCR has drawn up an emergency

preparedness plan in the eventuality of a massive repatriation movement. However, it needs to be emphasized that repatriation at the end of a conflict cannot be sustained unless it is accompanied by complementary measures to restore security, law and order, peace and the socio-economic well-being of returnees. Following a tripartite agreement signed in April by UNHCR with the Governments of the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, repatriation has been under way, although logistics and security-related problems have delayed progress.

16. On the initiative of the rebel authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and facilitated by a local non-governmental organization, Rwandan refugees began to repatriate in June from North and South Kivu. Once it was clear that the movement was voluntary, UNHCR stepped up its involvement. Further west, in Kasi and Equator provinces, the rebel advance resulted in a number of Rwandan refugees leaving the forest in search of greater safety. In both areas UNHCR provided limited assistance. As the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo deteriorated, Burundian refugees began to repatriate in May 1999. In addition to formidable operational constraints, UNHCR has had to face serious protection problems, such as determining the voluntariness of return and problems of access.

17. With the assistance of other relevant international bodies and organizations, UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat have been focusing on meeting that particular challenge. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, negotiations regarding access were entered into with the Government and the rebel authorities as a pre-condition to humanitarian aid. The principles of engagement for humanitarian assistance were endorsed by the Government in Kinshasa and by the opposition, setting out the basic operational guarantees of security and access for humanitarian organizations. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) cooperated with the Government to ensure the peaceful surrender of weapons by rebels, thus creating a secure environment for the follow-up of humanitarian tasks, while at the same time acting as a deterrent to further military confrontation.

18. Steps were also taken by UNHCR and host Governments towards ensuring the security and civilian character of refugee camps. This was the aim in the United Republic of Tanzania when, in October 1998, 278 policemen and women and security liaison officers were deployed to the refugee camps; subsidies and material support were also provided to enable the police to exercise their responsibilities. In Kenya, support was provided to set up a mobile court near the refugee camps. In Rwanda, in collaboration with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNHCR provided assistance to the judiciary towards the creation of an independent, fair and efficient system of justice, thus creating more confidence among the returnees. MINURCA played an active role in disarming some 6,000 elements of the Congolese army following their retreat from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Central African Republic.

19. Food assistance from the World Food Programme (WFP) in the Great Lakes region amounted in 1998 to over 420,000 tons, valued at close to $270 million. Beneficiaries (estimated at 1 million refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees) were mainly from Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. WFP assistance in the Republic of the Congo and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo amounted to over 10,000 tons, in each case valued at around $8 million.

20. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) played a leading role in coordinating assistance in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, establishing a United Nations humanitarian office in Goma in March 1999. Medical assistance was delivered to selected medical institutions serving internally displaced persons in Orientale and Kivu provinces. UNICEF has continued to support programmes for the identification, tracing and reunification of some 6,000 unaccompanied refugee children in North and South Kivu, Orientale, the Kasais, Katanga and Bas-Congo, in collaboration with UNHCR, ICRC and the Save the Children Fund (United Kingdom). According to a UNICEF survey, over half of all internally displaced persons in Burundi were children under the age of 16, and 56 per cent were female. UNICEF has supported therapeutic feeding activities for a monthly caseload of some 5,700 beneficiaries through the purchase and distribution of therapeutic milk, multi-vitamin mineral complexes and oral rehydration salts. Vaccination campaigns have included assisting with the distribution of vaccines and mobile vaccination activities, providing supplies of kerosene and equipment for the cold chain, as well as over 4.5 million doses of vaccines. In an effort to ensure that displaced and other children living in conflict-affected areas are not denied a primary school education, UNICEF has supported efforts by local communities to build and equip temporary schools and to repair existing classrooms by providing construction materials as well as financial and technical assistance. Emergency kits and school supplies have been made available to children displaced by violence; teacher training

programmes have been provided and training in peace education techniques. Water systems in camps for internally displaced persons and in local communities have been repaired through cooperation with UNICEF partners, while in emergency situations the Fund has provided water by truck and constructed temporary latrines. In camps for internally displaced persons, UNICEF has trained and equipped hygiene committees to teach improved hygiene and environmental sanitation.

21. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) activities in the Great Lakes region have included a community assistance umbrella programme in Burundi, designed to strengthen the efforts of rural communities to fully absorb returnees and contribute to social cohesion and the consolidation of peace in those communities. In Rwanda, UNDP is managing a trust fund of over $100 million from a number of donors. Again, the principal objective is community-level assistance that facilitates the reabsorption of community members, while in the Republic of the Congo, UNDP has become involved in an inter-agency umbrella programme that enrols thousands of young ex-combatants in reconstruction works in urban areas, where some 180,000 internally displaced persons are returning.

2. West Africa

22. Countries of West Africa currently host some 2.1 million refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR. By and large, prospects for durable solutions are encouraging, thanks to the extraordinary solidarity and support extended by West African States, despite the bleak economic situation faced by many of them.

23. Political situations in some parts of the region remain unstable. This is notably the case in Liberia, where an armed confrontation in April 1999 in Voinjama had a destabilizing effect, leading to additional displacements, while halting returns to Lofa county. Repatriation to other parts of the country continued, with the voluntary return of some 22,500 between January and June. The UNHCR presence and protection monitoring in main areas of return has allowed for an increased sense of security among refugees that is of vital importance to the stabilization process. In Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, UNHCR continued to provide protection and assistance to large numbers of refugees from Liberia, Sierra Leone and other countries. A census conducted in February in Guinea revealed that over 350,000 Sierra Leoneans currently resided in two provinces. In April, UNHCR launched a project to improve their safety by moving those in camps closest to the border to locations further inland. Over 14,000 persons have been transferred to date. The presence of large numbers of refugees in West Africa has led UNHCR to initiate small-scale environmental rehabilitation projects in affected areas. However, such initiatives require a concerted effort with others having expertise in this area.

24. In Sierra Leone, the Lomé Peace Agreement, signed between the Revolutionary United Front and the Government in July, has been an important and positive development, opening prospects for the gradual return of hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons to their homes. It is anticipated that this will take time, given the fragile security situation as well as limited access to main areas of return.

25. Another positive development has been the improved security situation in Guinea-Bissau as from May 1999. Since then most of the over 350,000 internally displaced persons have already returned to their homes with organized repatriation assisted by UNHCR for those having sought refuge in Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea and Senegal. In Mali and the Niger, efforts are focusing on consolidating the reintegration of returnees, combined with capacity-building. Elsewhere, notably in the Central African Republic, Chad and Gabon, the year has witnessed new refugee influxes resulting from conflict in the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan. Each of those movements has required an emergency response, pending longer-term solutions.

26. With the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement and the beginning of the demobilization and reintegration process, the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) declared its readiness to provide humanitarian agencies with the necessary support through security assessments, escorts and liaison functions. In the interim, the human rights section of UNOMSIL became active in monitoring human rights issues affecting internally displaced persons and made regular visits to camps for internally displaced persons and facilities for that purpose. It undertook two human rights monitoring missions during February and March 1999 to the refugee camps for Sierra Leonean refugees along the border between Guinea and Sierra Leone.

27. Food assistance from WFP in West African countries amounted to over 173 tons, valued at over $106 million. The estimated 1.8 million beneficiaries included refugees in Guinea, returnees in Liberia, displaced and war-affected persons in Sierra Leone, as well as refugees in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. In Mali, close to 15,000 tons of food aid were provided to 237,000 returnees, at a value of $13 million, while in Chad close to 30,000 refugees received 3,000 tons of food, costing $2.6 million.

28. In Sierra Leone, UNICEF has continued to coordinate and support programmes that target the special needs of over 3,000 abducted and war-affected children by tracing and family reunification, psycho-social programmes and planning for the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers as part of the peace process. UNICEF and its partners have also provided basic health care to both internally displaced persons and local populations. Diseases such as measles were combated by vaccination programmes covering over 70,000 children in areas with a large concentration of internally displaced persons where risks of epidemics were high. Supplies and training were provided for the construction and operation of water and sanitation facilities for 60,000 internally displaced persons, thus reducing the threat of cholera and other enteric diseases.

29. In Liberia, UNDP has delivered five programmes assisting communities, including returnees, in particular from neighbouring Sierra Leone, as well as many internally displaced persons. The programmes include physical rehabilitation of infrastructure, such as health clinics or schools; micro-credit and micro-grants for restoring livelihoods; vocational training and education, including training of 5,000 teachers.

3. East and Horn of Africa

30. The resumption of hostilities between Eritrea and Ethiopia late in 1998 dealt a tragic blow to hopes for peace and stability in the region. Not only did it cause population displacements in both countries, but it also had repercussions on internal conflicts in Somalia, leading to renewed hostilities in that war-torn country.

31. Recent mediation efforts by OAU, leading to the Framework Agreement and peace plan, thus represent a welcome development, reviving hopes for greater stability and a resumption of voluntary repatriation movements, which UNHCR has been promoting for a number of years. The main groups concerned are the Eritreans (mainly in the Sudan) and Somalis (of whom the largest groups are in Ethiopia and Kenya). Despite setbacks, some progress has been achieved in past months, with limited returns of Ethiopians from Kenya and of Somali refugees from Ethiopia to north-west Somalia, where conditions are considered safe. In each case, the return is coupled with measures such as quick impact projects to facilitate reintegration and ensure that the return is sustainable.

32. For the many thousands still languishing in camps in the region, efforts continue to meet basic needs through care and maintenance programmes and to strengthen refugee protection. In Kenya and Uganda, UNHCR has provided training for the police and security personnel in an attempt to help the authorities to curb acts of violence and criminality in areas surrounding the refugee camps and settlements. Communication equipment and vehicles are being supplied to the Kenyan police. Particular attention was paid by UNHCR to addressing the problems of sexual violence against women refugees. Through a donor-funded project, firewood was provided for each refugee household in the Kenyan camps to avoid the need for refugee women to go out in search of fuel wood in the surrounding areas of the camp and risk becoming victims of roving bandits. A private foundation made funds available to UNHCR to provide outreach and counselling services for refugee women who were survivors of sexual violence. The statistics on the incidence of reported sexual violence against refugee women fell drastically as a result of those measures. Refugee women in the United Republic of Tanzania benefited from a contribution towards establishing a special project to counter sexual violence against women. The project aimed at strengthening the ability of the law enforcement agency to prosecute accused persons and to provide training for the local police force and counselling services for victims.

33. The WFP programme in the Sudan provided close to 47,000 tons of food aid to 138,000 Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees, while nearly 125,000 tons were provided to an estimated 2.36 million internally displaced persons affected by war and drought (valued respectively at $25.5 million and over $142 million). In Ethiopia, over 91,000 tons of food were supplied to 263,000 refugees, while over 45 tons were provided to 272,000 internally displaced persons. The estimated value was over $43 million and over $24 million, respectively. Other important programmes of WFP were in Kenya, where 182,000 refugees received over 77,000 tons of supplies (at an estimated cost of $41 million) and in Uganda, where programmes for refugees and for internally displaced persons totalled over 100,000 tons valued at over $60 million.

34. For its part, UNICEF provided over $1.2 million worth of assistance to internally displaced persons in camps and host communities following the latest border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. This included high-protein supplementary foods for children under five, pregnant and lactating women. Health needs were met by the provision of essential supplies. In addition, an assessment of the psycho-social needs of deported and displaced children and their families is currently under way. In Ethiopia, similar assistance in areas of health, water supply, sanitation and shelter has been provided to persons displaced through the conflict, in addition to supporting basic primary education,

training field workers in psycho-social management and providing support to separated and unaccompanied children.

35. As part of efforts to secure sustainable return and reintegration, UNDP has implemented a rural rehabilitation programme in Somalia. This $30 million programme is being implemented through over 700 sub-projects in the economic, environment and social sectors in five separate regions of the country. In addition, working with Somali counterparts, United Nations agencies, UNHCR and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), with non-governmental organizations and with donors, UNDP is developing a comprehensive reintegration framework that will provide support for the rehabilitation needs of returnees in the host communities to which they will return.

4. Southern Africa

36. Nearly 300,000 refugees, returnees and asylum-seekers live in countries in the southern Africa region. They are, in general, persons of rural background residing in villages and settlements, the largest single group being Angolans, located mainly in Zambia (150,000). Civil conflicts raging in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have again had a heavy impact on the situation. New refugee emergencies have occurred in Zambia, with the arrival of some 25,000 Congolese refugees as of mid-June, and in Botswana with the influx of Namibians from the Caprivi region.

37. Protection has continued to be a major component of UNHCR activities in the region, with constant efforts to ensure that refugee status procedures function correctly and that refugees are treated in accordance with international principles and standards. Urban asylum-seekers and refugees throughout the region, although relatively few in number, have come to represent a critical issue for many countries. Increasingly restrictive policy and legal measures, along with worrying signs of xenophobia, have led to serious security, legal, social and economic problems for urban asylum-seekers and refugees. For those for whom voluntary repatriation is not feasible, the main objective of UNHCR has been to facilitate an enabling environment for local integration.

38. In Angola, where security conditions are critical, an important role has been played by the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola in assisting the United Nations and other international relief agencies in setting up and monitoring security arrangements and providing escorts to humanitarian convoys. Many of those tasks were related to the influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The civilian police component of the Mission also monitored, to the extent possible, the disarming of the civilian population in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in order to reduce prevailing insecurity, which affected the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

39. WFP activities in Angola have concerned both internally displaced persons (close to 540,000 persons) and war-affected persons throughout the country. WFP supplied 80,000 tons of food at a total cost of over $63 million. The situation of the population remains alarming, with increased malnutrition and epidemics such as polio, malaria, meningitis and cholera. UNICEF and its partners have responded with a mass immunization campaign covering over 600,000 children in accessible areas. UNICEF has also distributed relief supplies to thousands of families in besieged towns, such as Huambo and Luena, and to those who have fled to Luanda and its surroundings. School kits have been distributed and teachers have been trained to begin education activities. The threat of newly laid landmines is being addressed through a revived mine awareness campaign supported by UNICEF.

5. North Africa

40. There has been little change in the refugee situation throughout North Africa, where UNHCR has continued to provide basic care and assistance to refugees in countries of the region, pending voluntary repatriation and other long-term solutions. The slow process of implementation of the United Nations settlement plan in Western Sahara caused further delays in UNHCR preparatory activities for the repatriation of Saharawi refugees. However, a joint mission with the Government of Morocco took place in June 1999 to assess needs, including infrastructure required for reintegration and rehabilitation. A draft plan of action for the implementation of the cross-border confidence-building measures was submitted to the Security Council and the parties in July 1999 for their approval.

41. Following talks between the parties involved in the Western Sahara territory dispute, in its resolution 1238 (1999) of 13 May 1999, the Security Council permitted the resumption of the identification process for the contested tribes and the commencement of the appeals process for those Western Saharawis who had been rejected by the United Nations Identification Commission. This, in turn, enabled UNHCR offices in Algeria and Mauritania to resume the registration of identified eligible voters/refugees, with a view to possible repatriation in March 2000 to participate in a referendum planned for July 2000. Close cooperation is being maintained with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, which is responsible for certain key activities linked to those preparations.

C. Inter-agency cooperation

42. In addition to the many examples given in the preceding regional overview, inter-agency cooperation has been of particular note in a number of specific areas.

1. Security

43. Partnership with United Nations peacekeeping operations has been an important factor in helping to ensure the physical security of refugees and address the preoccupations of host countries. That partnership, also shared with Member States, has been particularly helpful in efforts to maintain the security and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements. As part of those efforts, UNHCR has on several occasions had to move the location of refugee populations away from border areas.

2. Sustainable return

44. Another area where inter-agency collaboration has been noteworthy is that of measures to ensure sustainable return. Refugees returning home after conflicts all too often find themselves in situations of fragile peace, within communities left divided and torn. It is therefore essential to avoid the dangerous gap between the provision of humanitarian assistance and that of longer-term development cooperation. To bridge such a gap, UNDP is providing support to emerging governance and administrative structures at the community, district and regional levels, in both rural and urban settings. UNDP programmes fall into three primary areas of activity: area-based economic and social assistance; reintegration support for specific target groups; and technical assistance and capacity-building for key institutions.

45. In July 1999, a workshop on repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees was jointly organized by UNHCR and other United Nations agencies, in Hargeisha, capital of north-west Somalia. Its purpose was to examine issues relating to post-conflict reconstruction by assessing needs and establishing linkages between repatriation, rehabilitation and the reintegration of returnees and internally displaced persons.

3. Access to populations of concern

46. To strengthen support to African countries coping with large numbers of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has increased its field presence in a number of countries, *inter alia*, in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Uganda. It has also focused particular efforts on advocating for safe and unhindered access to affected populations. This was notably the case in Angola, where the Office promoted the creation of operational guidelines, approved by the Government and accepted by both parties, as a basis for negotiations for cross-line delivery of humanitarian assistance. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, following negotiations with the Government and rebel authorities, principles of engagement for humanitarian assistance were endorsed by both the Government in Kinshasa and the opposition as a precondition for humanitarian aid, setting out the basic operational guarantees of security and access for humanitarian organizations.

47. Similar initiatives have been taken in Sierra Leone, where the Office promoted an agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front. The first United Nations inter-agency mission to rebel-held areas in the country was launched on 7 July 1999, followed by the establishment of an operational presence.

48. In June 1999, the United Nations launched its first humanitarian mission to the Sudan's Nuba Mountain region in more than a decade, in an effort to assess the needs of people in the rebel-held territory. At a meeting of the Technical Committee on Humanitarian Assistance, co-chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, an agreement for the implementation of rail and road cross-line corridors was signed by the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army.

4. Coordination of resources

49. In support of resource mobilization for humanitarian activities of United Nations agencies, significant progress was made in strengthening the consolidated appeals process, in particular by enhancing the capacity of country teams to manage and implement the process through training and workshops. For 1999, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs launched, on behalf of humanitarian organizations, consolidated inter-agency appeals for nine African countries, with programmes for a total of $697,322,694 to target over 11 million beneficiaries. As at 20 April 1999, close to $140 million had been raised. The response level, however, has differed greatly from one country to the other and the lack of adequate funding continues to hamper the effectiveness of the United Nations agencies' response in several countries.

50. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, through its Integrated Regional Information Network for Africa, with offices in Abidjan, Nairobi and

Johannesburg, supported coordination efforts by facilitating wider access to information, in particular from regional sources, and promoting information exchanges among personnel from United Nations agencies and departments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations, donor countries, Governments, academia and the media.

5. Unaccompanied minors

51. UNHCR, UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights cooperated in monitoring, collecting and sharing information on unaccompanied children. Discussions were held at the first African Conference on the Use of Children as Soldiers, hosted by the Government of Mozambique in April 1999. Through cooperation with partners that included UNHCR, UNICEF and relevant non-governmental organizations, the situation of those children was raised with States parties. (Other relevant information is to be found in the report on the implementation of resolution 53/122 (A/54/285).)

D. Cooperation with regional and subregional bodies

1. Organization of African Unity

52. UNHCR has continued to advocate the accession of African States to the 1969 OAU Convention. Material and financial assistance have been provided to support the proper functioning of structures in charge of refugee affairs in countries of asylum, in order to allow Governments to better assume their international responsibilities.

53. As regards internal displacement in Africa, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights undertook a number of initiatives with particular emphasis on working with regional and subregional organizations in addressing the assistance, protection and development needs of internally displaced persons. They included support for the organization of regional seminars and workshops on those issues.

2. Southern African Development Community

54. Cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has centred on two SADC initiatives that concern disaster preparedness and peacekeeping operations. A major military/civilian exercise was held in South Africa in April 1999 to enhance the region's peacekeeping capabilities. UNHCR participated actively in the elaboration of the humanitarian aspects of the exercise. SADC also played a prominent role in the Democratic Republic of the Congo peace process and became increasingly involved in conflict resolution in both southern Africa and East Africa. To help SADC further in that process, UNHCR committed financial support to the SADC peace process and played an active role in ensuring the formulation of the agreement on guiding humanitarian principles, which is part of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

III. Conclusion

55. Problems caused by human displacement in Africa continue to be a source of concern for the United Nations, requiring coordinated action by UNHCR and other agencies concerned. This is particularly true at a time when major emergencies elsewhere have tended to draw the world's attention and to make heavy claims on available resources.

56. While acknowledging the serious situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, there have been some encouraging signs in recent months that problems could be solved. The 1999 summit of OAU witnessed a spirit of openness and determination to find such solutions. The ceasefire agreements in Sierra Leone, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the Framework Agreement in the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia are all important indicators of that trend.

57. Yet the lasting success of such agreements, as well as solutions in other conflict situations that continue to be a major cause of population movements, will require a renewed commitment by African Governments to take their future, and the future of their peoples, more resolutely into their own hands. Lasting solutions to problems, including refugee problems, can only come through negotiations rather than force. This determination is a fundamental precondition for international support. The international community, for its part, must do all in its power to back such efforts.

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Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 53/59 B of 3 December 1998, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-first session, in 1999, and to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, in 1999, on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of the recommendations contained therein.

2. Seven reports were submitted to the Committee on Information at its twenty-first session, held from 3 to 14 May 1999, entitled:

(a) "Reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications" (A/AC.198/1999/2);

(b) "Integration of United Nations information centres with field offices of the United Nations Development Programme" (A/AC.198/1999/3);

(c) "United Nations information centres in 1998: allocation of resources from the regular budget of the United Nations" (A/AC.198/1999/4);

(d) "Development of United Nations international radio broadcasting capacity: design and scope of a pilot project" (A/AC.198/1999/5);

(e) "Continuous development, maintenance and enrichment of United Nations Web sites" (A/AC.198/1999/6);

(f) "Activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee" (A/AC.198/1999/7);

(g) "Proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (Programme 23, Public information)" (A/AC.198/1999/8).

3. At the request of the Committee on Information, the Secretary-General prepared a follow-up report (A/AC.198/1999/9) to his initial report on United Nations Web sites (see above) for consideration by the Committee at a resumed session scheduled for early November 1999.

4. The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information provided additional substantive information in his opening statement to the Committee on Information at its twenty-first session.

5. The deliberations of the Committee on Information at its twenty-first session are reflected in its report to the General Assembly.[1] The present report responds to resolution 53/59 B, and updates the information previously provided to the General Assembly.

II. Overview

6. Since the previous report on questions relating to information (A/53/509), the Department has continued the reorientation of its activities, as broadly outlined in that report, with a view of achieving the objective of projecting the United Nations Organization as an open, transparent and public institution capable of meeting the principal objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's bulletin outlining the new structure of the Department, consistent with the thrust of the objectives of the reorientation of its activities, was issued in July 1999 (ST/SGB/1999/10).

7. During the period under review, the Department has concentrated its reorientation efforts on the following areas:

(a) Continued application of the latest technological developments to both improve programme delivery in the print, radio and television media, and at the same time further strengthen its outreach to audiences around the world through the United Nations Web site on the Internet, which the Department manages and coordinates;

(b) Development of a more effective news gathering and delivery system, which had been identified by the Secretary-General as one of the most immediate priorities in the process of reorientation of the work of the Department;

(c) Continued strengthening of the Organization's ability to communicate at the country and regional levels, to ensure that the global messages of the United Nations are tailored to national orientations.

8. During the period under review, despite serious financial constraints the Department has made the United Nations Web site available in all six official languages, through temporary redeployment of staff and other measures. The availability of audio and video elements on the Web site has also increased considerably, in addition to the continuous introduction of new elements, as warranted by current developments, such as the Web pages on Kosovo and East Timor. Discussions are under way in the Committee on Information and other relevant intergovernmental bodies on possible approaches to further multilingual development of Web pages in all official languages, as resources permit.

9. As part of its reorientation in the area of news gathering and dissemination, the Department has proceeded with the creation of a Web-based United Nations News Service, through the redeployment of the staff of its Editorial Section to the newly renamed News and Media Services Division. The objective of the News Service is to provide

the global media as speedily as possible with the news material generated by the Organization through the application of the latest advances in communications technology. The News Service is structured in a manner that will use the demand for news to provide a higher profile for the less widely covered United Nations concerns and activities in the area of economic and social development. A further important by-product of this effort is speedier, more cost-effective and more visually attractive production for a range of the Department's outputs in all mediums.

10. The strengthening of the Organization's capacity to communicate at the country level remains one of the primary objectives of the reorientation exercise. United Nations information centres have contributed to this goal by providing public information programmes in local languages and promoting activities that emphasize the relevance of the United Nations work to daily concerns of people around the world. The presence of the centres in the community and their familiarity with local conditions has allowed them to deliver the Organization's message effectively in a local context, making them not just information disseminators but true communicators. Thus, the "global vision" of the United Nations gains a "local voice", through relationships that the information centres have developed with the local community.

11. The Department has also cooperated closely with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in developing and promoting a strategy for closer ties with the international business community. It produced an information kit used by the Secretary-General both in his contacts with corporate executives and for press outreach and strengthened regular contacts with key journalists. Advance copies of a book published by the Department on the United Nations role in facilitating global commerce were used by the Secretary-General in his meeting with the International Chamber of Commerce held on 5 July 1999.

III. Electronic communications and use of the Internet

12. The Department is continuing to strengthen its coordination, management and policy guidance role on content matters for the Secretariat's Internet activities. With the November 1998 launch of United Nations Web sites in Arabic and Chinese, information about the Organization is now electronically available in all six official languages. It must, however, be emphasized that the amount of materials in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish remains relatively small due to the lack of allocated resources for the maintenance and development of United Nations Web site activities. Possible courses of action to remedy this imbalance have been suggested in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/1999/9).

13. The Department moved swiftly to launch the new Web pages on the United Nations missions in Kosovo and East Timor, which feature information obtained directly from the field, as well as background information and relevant General Assembly and Security Council documents.

14. The sessions of the General Assembly were broadcast live via the Internet and accessed by a significant number of users. The United Nations Web site itself has witnessed a substantial increase in usage — from 5,304,722 accesses per month in January 1998 to 12,096,487 in January 1999 and 13,568,990 in July 1999.

15. New Web pages on the United Nations and civil society and the United Nations and business were launched in January 1999. They highlight the cooperation between the Organization and various partners in civil society, and provide the business community with information on procurement opportunities within the United Nations system.

16. The United Nations CyberSchoolBus, the Department's on-line education project, was selected as one of 20 finalists in the prestigious Ericsson Internet Community Awards, out of a pool of over 1,400 entries. This site captures the growing potential of the Internet as an educational tool, and provides an effective medium for disseminating information and resources about international affairs to diverse communities of students and educators around the world. Over 80,000 schools from over 100 countries have used this site so far to access activities and projects that teach students about global issues in an interactive, engaging and lively way.

IV. Public information programme activities

17. The Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General has continued to inform the accredited press, delegations and the public at large on the broad scope of activities of the United Nations, providing a comprehensive picture of the Organization's work, ranging from political issues emanating from Headquarters and from peacekeeping missions in the field to newsworthy topics relating to activities of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. Over the past year, the Office has capitalized on Internet technology to expand the audience for its products. Highlights of the daily briefing are

posted on the United Nations Web site by early afternoon, allowing users around the world to access the latest developments in an easy-to-read format, in addition to information on the Secretary-General's appointments, the schedule of press conferences and other breaking developments, as required.

18. In addition to the arrangements in place to reach its key constituency, the accredited correspondents based at Headquarters, the Department has stepped up its efforts to reach and establish links with journalists based in as many Member States as possible, given the demands of the 24-hour news cycle that the broadcast media in particular have to deal with. The principal vehicle for this intensified effort is the Web-based United Nations News Service, which was launched in September 1999. The Service was built around the newly established News Centre on the United Nations Web site to give an immediate indication of the main news developments of the day, composed primarily of extended headlines, which in turn are electronically linked to more complete news texts, as well as the texts of reports and statements. A number of other links lead interested users to other pages on the United Nations Web site.

19. An electronic mail service is also being developed to carry news from Headquarters directly to journalists around the world, in cooperation with United Nations information centres and other United Nations offices. With the assistance of other organizations of the United Nations system, arrangements are also being made to develop lists of journalists with interest in specific areas so that they can be immediately alerted of relevant news, reports and proposals.

20. Another dimension of this Service will be the effort, to be undertaken in close cooperation with United Nations information centres and services, to arrange for appearances of senior United Nations officials connected with news developments or the release of major United Nations reports or proposals on pressing international concerns on important television and radio programmes worldwide. As part of the effort to promote the image of the United Nations as an open and transparent organization in its dealings with the press, the Secretary-General issued in April 1999 a set of guidelines for Secretariat officials in their dealings with the media.

21. The News Service is also responsible for the placement of Op-ed articles by the Secretary-General on pressing United Nations issues in newspapers around the world. In recent months, pieces on the Iraq stand-off, on the need to better support African efforts in the event of conflict prevention and peace-building, and on humanitarian disasters have been published in a large number of newspapers in most industrialized as well as developing countries.

22. The News Service is part of a wider initiative to increase the accessibility and transparency of the United Nations to the world media. In April 1999, the Department organized a series of highly successful briefings for the members of the United States National Conference of Editorial Writers, in which the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the heads of three United Nations programmes and funds and most New York-based Under-Secretaries-General participated. The impact of this unprecedented high-level programme was demonstrated by a series of favourable stories on United Nations concerns and activities that continue to appear in the regional press in the United States of America, news services and public radio programmes. The Department intends to build on this momentum with continuing similar programmes for national and regional press in the United States, as well as for the international media.

23. The Web-based News Service also serves as the hub of the integrated multimedia operation providing audio and visual materials to a global audience. The audio-visual Web page on the United Nations Web site has been expanded to include "sound bites" of key United Nations players taken from their press conferences, briefings and other appearances on major issues of the moment, such as Iraq, Kosovo and East Timor, becoming an important news source for the broadcast media in particular. The same site also offers radio programmes and audio feed, as well as photographs that interested media organizations can download for their own use.

24. Also as part of its efforts to harness the flexibility of the Internet, the Department has initiated an audio pilot project with China Radio International, enabling this partner to instantaneously receive, in a number of formats, the audio files of the Chinese language programming of United Nations Radio.

25. The Department has recently produced a compact disk containing a special series of radio programmes on population and development. It is envisaged that in the near future, additional radio programmes will be produced in this format, rather than on audio tape cassettes, for stations that can use the new technology. The Department continues to provide a full range of programming on tape to those stations that are not yet able to receive materials through the new communications channels.

26. At its twenty-first session, in May 1999, the Committee on Information continued its consideration of the issue of the development of an international radio

broadcasting capacity for the United Nations, and had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the design and scope of a pilot project (A/AC.198/1999/5). In response to a request contained in the report of the Committee to the General Assembly,[1] the Department of Public Information prepared a questionnaire to determine the interest of radio broadcasting stations and networks in Member States in carrying a daily programme of the United Nations Radio in their regions. A letter was circulated to the Permanent Representatives of Member States, together with the questionnaire, with a view to assessing the prospects for both in-kind contributions in the form of airtime on broadcasting facilities or cash towards a trust fund to be used to launch a pilot project for the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations.

27. The Department has continued to strengthen its relationship with television organizations worldwide. In cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), it co-produced a five-part series of 45-minute documentaries with the German public broadcaster ZDF on the general theme "Year of the six billion". Also, building on the Department's long-standing relationship with Cable News Network, a one-day session during the annual conference of contributors to its "World report" was held at United Nations Headquarters in May 1999.

28. The audio-visual products of the Department also continue to receive international acclaim. United Nations Radio won its second award in as many years in the international category at the New York Festivals competition for its documentary series on population and development, while the video documentary on human rights entitled "For everyone everywhere" won the Certificate for Creative Excellence at the United States Film and Video Festival.

29. The third United Nations World Television Forum, on the theme "The future of audio-visual memory: looking at the twentieth century — towards the twenty-first century", took place on 19 and 20 November 1998. Organized by the Department of Public Information, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, the World Television Forum was co-sponsored by a number of national and international broadcasting organizations. Two exhibits were on display in conjunction with the Forum: a video-wall exhibit consisting of 100 television monitors continuously showing television programmes produced by the United Nations, organizations of the United Nations system and broadcast organizations participating in the Forum; and a high-definition television demonstration. The Forum was also broadcast live on the Internet. The fourth Forum will be held at Headquarters on 18 and 19 November 1999.

30. Over the last year, the Department continued to enhance its cooperation with the growing community of nearly 1,600 non-governmental organizations associated with it. The fifty-second annual Non-Governmental Organizations Conference, held from 15 to 17 September 1999 on the theme "Challenges of a globalized world: finding new directions", attracted some 1,700 participants from 47 countries. Twenty-eight panellists and speakers representing the United Nations system, Governments, non-governmental organizations, academia and media discussed the impact of globalization on trade and finance, labour, agriculture, communications and partnerships.

31. The Department also continued to hold regular weekly briefings for non-governmental organizations to stimulate dialogue among representatives of civil society on issues on the United Nations agenda. The briefings, many of which were organized in cooperation with the organizations of the United Nations system, Secretariat offices and non-governmental organizations committees, were on average attended by 175 participants per week. The Department also co-sponsored special substantive briefings with non-governmental partners on such issues as ageing, human settlements, women's rights, health, environment and development. To extend outreach opportunities and facilitate audio monitoring of the weekly briefings by the United Nations press corps, the Department is looking into the possibility of in-house audio coverage of these briefings.

32. In 1998, 29 new non-governmental organizations were granted association with the Department, and in March 1999 held its annual orientation programme for newly accredited representatives. The two-and-a-half day event was attended by 130 representatives from 15 countries. The interest in association with the Department has continued to grow, and over the past year more than 450 applications for association were reviewed. Some 50 applicants have been selected for submission to the Department's Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations for final review at the end of 1999.

33. The Department has also redesigned its Web page for non-governmental organizations, adding new links and response features to make it more comprehensive and user-friendly. Four new computers, providing access to the United Nations optical disk system and the Internet, were donated by the non-governmental community to the Department's Resource Centre for use by associated organizations.

34. The Department of Public Information continues to emphasize its education outreach activities, both through

direct, face-to-face contact and also electronically, through the increasing use of video-conferencing. Through "Students' days at the United Nations", children are encouraged to learn about the aims and activities of the United Nations and also how they, individually, can make a difference in today's world. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Department organized a student conference on human rights which brought together over 400 students from seven countries. Designed as a learning experience, the event was the culmination of similar conferences held in participants' schools.

35. Workshops for teachers are now routinely organized by the Department, often in partnership with non-governmental organizations and local school districts. Such activities are aimed at deepening understanding of the issues being dealt with by the United Nations, acquainting educators with the resources available to them, and strengthening ties between the Organization and the educational community.

36. The Department also continued to arrange briefing programmes for groups. Taking advantage of technological innovations, such briefings are increasingly held electronically, through video-conferencing, resulting in savings for both the United Nations and the requesting organization. In October 1999, in association with a coalition of non-governmental organizations active in distance-learning, the Department is launching a series of monthly video conferences on issues of priority concern to the United Nations.

37. The guided tour continued to be the most visible part of the Organization's services to visitors, and one of the most immediate and direct ways of disseminating information to the public, with attendance approaching half a million annually. Efforts are currently under way to revitalize the visitor experience with the objective of attracting an even greater number of visitors to Headquarters.

38. The Department also continued to help plan and coordinate a number of special events and programmes. An observance of World Press Freedom Day was held on 3 May 1999, co-sponsored by the Department, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Freedom Forum, on the theme: "Turbulent eras: generational perspectives on freedom of the press". The second annual International Public Relations Forum, co-sponsored by the Department and the Public Relations Society of America International Section, on the theme "Public relations and the United Nations: the private sector and social responsibility", took place in June 1999.

V. Implementation of specific information programmes

39. The Department continued to develop thematically integrated information programmes that highlight the Organization's role in furthering economic and social development, human rights and peace and security. In close cooperation with other substantive departments of the Secretariat and with the organizations of the United Nations system, it is focusing many activities on the follow-up to the cycle of global conferences held earlier this decade.

40. *Development Update*, a bi-monthly newsletter on United Nations economic and social initiatives, continued to closely track the rapidly growing role of the United Nations system in economic affairs and its closer ties with the private sector. This publication, which reaches business executives, journalists, civil society organizations and development agencies, has provided readers with authoritative analysis of issues and events, such as the Secretary-General's "global compact" with the business community, closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, the impact of the recent global financial crisis, the explosive growth of the Internet, the possible effects of the Year 2000 (Y2K) computer bug and the social dimension of international trade policy.

41. In close cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Public Information undertook a broad range of public information activities to promote the special sessions of the General Assembly held in 1999 on the five-year review of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In the context of the latter event, a promotional campaign focusing on environmental and regional media was organized and appropriate information materials prepared. In addition, strong cooperation was pursued with the Small Islands Developing States Network (SIDSNET), the Internet site for small islands run by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which resulted in a broad range of public information products, activities and outreach.

42. The Department also began the implementation of multimedia public information and communications

strategies to promote issues pertaining to the upcoming special sessions of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women. Moreover, the Department also continued to implement a multimedia information campaign to publicize the issues relating to the ongoing International Year of Older Persons, with the opening of an exhibit entitled "A society for all ages" in September 1999 and other promotional activities.

43. The Department has also continued to initiate and coordinate activities within the framework of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights and the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), which also coincided with the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Events at Headquarters on 10 December 1998 (Human Rights Day) were numerous and varied. The Human Rights Film Festival, organized by the International Council of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in cooperation with the Department, included screenings of documentaries in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium over four days in December 1998.

44. The Department developed a public information and communications strategy for the upcoming Tenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Treatment of Offenders, to be held at Vienna from 10 to 17 April 2000, and continued to play an important role in facilitating the work of journalists covering the process leading towards the establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

45. The Department also publicized the regional hearings held with a view to generating innovative ideas in preparation for the Millennium Assembly and Summit. It also began the preparation of a global communications strategy in support of this milestone event.

46. In the area of peace and security, the Department has continued its efforts to promote public awareness of related issues, including security of personnel in field missions and disarmament, and strengthened its outreach, particularly through the Internet.

47. Increasing resources of the Department were provided for support for the information components of peacekeeping and other field missions, beginning in early planning stages for such missions. It has continued to participate in the meetings of Secretariat task forces and other bodies dealing with day-to-day issues related to ongoing operations, and maintained its regular consultations with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on requirements and vacancies to be filled in information components in the field and other related issues. As field work in public information involves special requirements regarding linguistic ability, technical skills (in such fields as broadcasting) and familiarity with the political, cultural and media environment of mission areas, the Department has compiled some 250 names on its roster of candidates for such positions. It has also endeavoured to make a number of its own staff available for secondment to field missions.

48. The Department has also undertaken a complete redesign of its peacekeeping Web page with the aim of providing users with easy access to a wealth of information about United Nations peacekeeping. Established in close cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the page is jointly maintained, with regular updates covering all existing peacekeeping operations, along with extensive background information on earlier missions.

49. The special photographic exhibit designed and produced by the Department to observe the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping was seen by over 45,000 visitors at Headquarters after its launch in October 1998. It later travelled to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, and is scheduled to visit three cities in Germany in November and December 1999. In July 1999, the Government of Singapore generously sponsored the production of an adapted version of the exhibit for display in Singapore.

50. The anniversary also offered an opportunity for more direct communication between peacekeepers and students, when the Department launched an interactive Web site in connection with its CyberSchoolBus. Some 140 schools around the world were able to benefit from question-and-answer sessions between students and public information personnel in five United Nations peacekeeping operations.

51. In accordance with its mandate in the field of arms limitation and disarmament and working closely with the Department of Disarmament Affairs, the Department has continued to publicize United Nations activities in those areas, including on issues relating to coordinating action on small arms and their impact on conflict situations. In cooperation with the other departments concerned, it also worked on public information activities in advance of the first meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention banning antipersonnel landmines, which took place at Maputo in May 1999.

52. In accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Department has continued its ongoing special information programme on the question of Palestine. It organized an international seminar for journalists on the question of Palestine entitled "Prospects for peace", held at

Madrid on 23 and 24 March 1999. The seminar reviewed developments in the peace process and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and discussed prospects for peace and the economic situation in the region. At the request of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Department created a video database on the question of Palestine from 1948 to January 1999. Also, as in every year since 1995, the Department has organized a training programme for Palestinian journalists aimed at strengthening the participants' professional capacity as information media personnel. Eight participants are enrolled in the programme this year, which will run from 25 October to 13 December 1999.

53. The Department's multimedia activities covered a wide range of issues on decolonization, including public information support for the Caribbean Regional Seminar on Non-Self-Governing Territories, held at Castries from 25 to 27 May 1999. In cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs, the Department also recently created a Web page on decolonization.

54. The Department's 1999 training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries, scheduled for 13 September to 22 October 1999, will provide 20 junior and mid-level media professionals with in-depth knowledge of the work of the United Nations and its agencies and programmes by giving them intensive training during the regular session of the General Assembly. While at Headquarters, the participants also serve as United Nations correspondents for their own media outlets and report on the activities of the Organization. To date, nearly 300 journalists from almost 150 countries have participated in the programme. Participants in the 1999 programme, including four sponsored by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany, are from Angola, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Croatia, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Uruguay.

VI. Library services

55. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library is continuing its efforts to become a virtual library with a worldwide outreach, making the United Nations information and externally acquired materials accessible electronically to a growing audience. Emphasis has been placed on Web-related activities (Internet/Intranet); digitization of United Nations documents; inter-agency resource sharing; training programmes for the staff of permanent missions, the Secretariat and depository libraries; multilingualism; and cartographic services for the Security Council.

56. The Library's presence on the Internet continues to increase, with its Web page receiving close to 1.5 million accesses in 1998 and 1.2 million in the first six months of 1999. New elements include the full text of current General Assembly resolutions in English and French; the electronic newsletter *Depository News Updates*, and the "United Nations System Pathfinder". This last resource serves as a guide to major reference sources and frequently requested reports issued by the United Nations and the specialized agencies. In addition, a number of already existing elements on the Library's Web page have been expanded, both in size and enhancement of existing features. In keeping with the Organization's renewed emphasis on multilingualism, parts of the Library's Web page are now available in Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

57. The Library's Intranet site serves as a gateway providing staff with easy access to a number of external on-line services. It includes new features, such as a page on career development resources and an expansion of "Cyberlinks" (a collection of links to regional and subject-oriented Internet sites and news services) to include an on-line Internet tutorial.

58. The Library's major database, the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS), hitherto available only on the mainframe and internally through the Integrated Library Management System, is scheduled to become available on a Web platform in fall 1999. Access will be provided initially to official users (permanent missions and Secretariat staff worldwide) with public access planned for a later date.

59. The United Nations Consortium, an inter-agency activity initiated in 1998, currently has 28 members. As a result of its expanding membership and the increased number of electronic products/services available through this resource at volume-driven subscription rates, purchase cost savings in 1999 are expected to exceed those of 1998 (US$ 57 million). Remote desktop access is now available, for delegates as well as staff in all participating organizations, to the full text of over 3,000 journals, 10 international newspapers, five major databases and more than 10 news wires in English, French, Spanish and German. The cost of providing electronic services to the permanent missions continues to be borne for the most part by the Library. Where sufficient funding is not available, the Library, in cooperation with the Department of Management, makes every effort to coordinate subscriptions, secure volume-

driven rates and arrange for direct billing to participating missions.

60. Delivery of customized information to staff and missions via electronic mail continued to grow. In 1998, the total number of electronic messages was over 2.9 million. By July 1999, 40 electronic publications were made available to more than 5,000 subscribers worldwide.

61. As of August 1999, there were 373 United Nations depository libraries in 143 countries. Their numbers by region are as follows: Asia and the Pacific, 83; Western Asia, 17; Africa, 55; Europe, 116 (32 in Eastern and 84 in Western Europe); Latin America and the Caribbean, 48; and North America, 54 (42 in the United States of America and 12 in Canada).

62. As part of its outreach to civil society in Member States, the Library has continued to conduct training seminars and workshops for United Nations depository librarians. In addition to a variety of ad hoc training seminars, regional workshops were organized at New Delhi and Port-of-Spain in January 1999 and at Santiago in June 1999. A fourth workshop is scheduled to be held at Beirut in October 1999.

63. In order to facilitate multilingual subject access to United Nations databases, including the optical disk system, the Library has undertaken a project to translate the *UNBIS Thesaurus*, which is already available in English, French and Spanish, into the remaining official languages.

64. With the launch of a specialized Web page for maps (Intranet in March and Internet in July 1999), the Department's cartographic services have been significantly expanded. The page contains up-to-date peacekeeping maps, regional and country-profile maps, as well as information on cartographic resources and recent acquisitions of the Map Library.

65. The Department is also moving towards the Geographic Information Systems technology, which has the potential to facilitate the work of a number of departments. The interactive thematic mapping provided by this System has been introduced in closed consultations in the Security Council, as the proposed enhancement to the digital cartographic display system already in operation. The Department is currently cooperating with the organizations of the United Nations system to develop a standard geographic database of the world taking advantage of the new technology.

VII. United Nations Publications Board and marketing of United Nations publications

66. Through the monthly meetings of its Working Committee, the Publications Board continued to monitor the 1998-1999 consolidated publications programme of the United Nations and reviewed Secretariat submissions for the 2000-2001 biennial publications programme.

67. In the area of sales and marketing, the Department has expanded its cooperation with United Nations organizations to promote their publications, and it organized a series of cooperative exhibits at major international book fairs, contributing to strong sales results for 1998.

68. A major promotional campaign was also undertaken to promote the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Colour brochures featuring human rights publications as well as souvenir items developed by the Geneva Giftshop were produced and over 50,000 distributed worldwide. In an effort to penetrate the market for Spanish language books, a 56-page catalogue was prepared and mailed to 25,000 potential customers in Latin America, including a substantial number of members of the business community. This promotional campaign resulted in a 100 per cent increase in sales in that region in the past year. Other promotional mailings included 25,000 publications catalogues by the United Nations University, as well as 20 individual direct mail campaigns reaching a further 250,000 customers worldwide. In addition, over 75 advertisements were placed in selected professional and academic journals, and 15 major book exhibits were coordinated worldwide.

69. The United Nations Publications Web page, which provides regular updates on all new titles, added Spanish and French sites. The ongoing development of the Web page, combined with the sale of publications through major commercial Internet booksellers, has seen the average monthly income from the Internet sales double in the last year, although its overall share still remains small. In addition, new electronic products have been developed in association with author departments. CHEMLEX CD-ROM was launched in conjunction with the Economic Commission for Europe, while the *Demographic Yearbook* on CD-ROM and a Windows version of the *Statistical Yearbook* on CD-ROM were developed in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

70. At the beginning of the year, the Department completed a significant renovation of the Bookshop at

Headquarters, increasing the shelf space and enhancing the presentation of the products available, thereby providing the Organization with the potential to enhance its revenues.

71. Efforts have also continued to expand the outreach of the Organization through co-published products. To secure wider distribution in Chinese, for example, a number of agreements have been signed with publishers to translate and sell important United Nations publications in that language. Also, to increase dissemination of United Nations publications in Africa, an initiative was undertaken to contact publishers in Africa with a view to establishing closer cooperation.

VIII. Publishing activities

72. Publications remain an essential component of the Department's information and media strategy, aimed at providing useful and current information on the activities of the Organization throughout the world. While moving towards a greater use of electronic media, the Department maintains its commitment to print, which still remains the most widely accepted and authoritative method of communications in both developing and developed countries. As we proceed on the dual paths of communication, the *UN Chronicle*, *Africa Recovery* and *Development Business* continue to update their respective Web pages, thus widening their outreach. Technological advances have also been used to improve the timeliness of all four recurrent print publications, including the *Yearbook of the United Nations*.

73. On the basis of changing information priorities and feedback from users, the Department has continued to revise and update several of its well-tested publications, including its annual publications "UN in brief" and "Image and reality". With the assistance of the New York-based Council on International and Public Affairs, the Department also issued a thoroughly revised edition of its best-selling textbook *World Concerns and the United Nations: Model Teaching Units for Primary, Secondary and Teacher Education*, aimed at developing international curricula in school systems throughout the world.

74. The forty-fourth volume of the *Yearbook*, covering all major activities of the Organization during 1990, was published in July 1999, eliminating the backlog in its production. This will enable the Department to issue the 50 editions of this publication on CD-ROM in the near future. The 1997 and 1998 editions of the *Yearbook* are now under preparation.

75. This year, the *UN Chronicle* has increasingly provided in-depth coverage of specific subjects, offering its pages as a forum for discussion, dissent and debate. A number of eminent writers have provided contributions, helping to make this publication a serious resource of ideas and information. The publication's Web page has also been thoroughly revamped, allowing greater access for computers with limited graphic-download availability and offering a direct electronic link for questions relating to uploaded articles, or to the work of the United Nations in general.

76. Measures to reduce African poverty and integrate the continent more fully into the global economy have been covered actively by *Africa Recovery*, the Department's quarterly publication dedicated to promoting awareness of Africa's economic crisis. Recent issues have closely examined the repercussions of the introduction of the euro and the wide-ranging trade pact between South Africa and the European Union on African economies, and examined local and international efforts to further African development.

77. Responding to the global need for timely and up-to-date information on procurement opportunities available from the United Nations, in January 1999 the Department launched its subscription Web site service "United Nations development business on-line". Building on a solid subscriber base, this service provides more immediate and user-friendly access to business opportunities generated by the United Nations system, the World Bank, the regional development banks and government entities. This site assists developing countries in the procurement of goods and services at internationally competitive prices, and strengthens the Organization's efforts to widen its reach to the business community by providing improved access to business opportunities in the multi-billion-dollar development market. The site is registered on 16 major search engines, including Yahoo. The Department also continues to offer 24 issues of *Development Business* per year.

IX. United Nations information centres

78. During the past year, United Nations information centres have continued to develop solid networks with the media and non-governmental organizations, and occasionally with the business community, working in partnership to promote a greater understanding of the priority issues before the United Nations. Also, taking advantage of technological developments, a number of information centres have been able to considerably increase their outreach through the

development and continuous enrichment of Web sites in local languages, thereby strengthening their ability to communicate more efficiently with local audiences. So far, 24 United Nations information centres have established such Web sites, representing a 50 per cent increase over the previous year. Other information centres also made progress in the better use of new communications technology through the development and dissemination of electronic news bulletins containing information on the activities of all organizations of the United Nations system.

79. Special consideration this past year was given to youth outreach, including essay contests, sports competitions, musical events, theatrical productions, workshops and model United Nations conferences in more than 50 countries. With the support of Government ministries concerned, youth-oriented non-governmental organizations and educational institutions, information centres helped tomorrow's leaders to better understand the Organization's principles and role on the eve of a new millennium.

80. The information centres also worked on innovative outreach campaigns with private sector companies, artists, musicians and the media (for details, see A/AC.198/1999/4; and the United Nations Web site (including photographs)).

81. In the course of the year, the centres undertook numerous public information and communications activities geared to local audiences and concerns, and translated the relevant information materials into local languages to promote issues relating to special events and observances, including the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as special sessions of the General Assembly for the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

82. Throughout 1999, the information centres also initiated a number of outreach activities to mark the International Year of Older Persons. Some information centres developed creative information campaigns to sensitize the general population to the needs of older persons, while others encouraged journalists to more actively cover ageing. In most cases, the information centres have forged partnerships with national associations for senior citizens to develop information programmes that are culturally appropriate and tailored to the needs of the local community. The information centres have also made an effort to involve older persons themselves in the observance, from organizing athletic and dance competitions to highlighting local and national legislation to benefit the elderly.

83. The information centres also continued to be actively involved in public information outreach for peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. The United Nations information centres at Jakarta and Lisbon were closely involved in the preparation of information materials on the referendum in East Timor and its translation into Bahasa Indonesian, Portuguese and Tetun. In preparation for the referendum, the United Nations information centre at Jakarta issued press releases in English and Bahasa Indonesian on the location of the voters' registration centres at Jakarta, and organized a press conference to explain the voter registration process. After the referendum, these two centres and the United Nations information centre at Sydney, as well as other information centres throughout the world, were involved in publicizing efforts by the Secretary-General and the Security Council to find a solution to the East Timor crisis.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/54/21).

Annex

Major activities of the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/59 B*

I. Institutional publications

		DPI and/or Sales No.
1.	"Discovering the UN" (October 1998; also available in Spanish and Mongolian)	2006
2.	"UN: this is your organization", multilingual promotional brochure (including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, German and Japanese)	2026
3.	*UN Chronicle*, vol. XXXV, No. 1 (September 1998, French), No. 2 (special section on drugs, June 1998, French; regular issue, November 1998, French), No. 3 (October 1998, English; March, French) and No. 4 (January, English; April, French); vol. XXXVI, No. 1 (March, English) and No. 2 (July, English)	
4.	*Yearbook of the United Nations*, vol. 44 (1990) (July, English; last of the backlog editions)	E.98.I.16
5.	*Basic Facts about the United Nations*, new edition (November 1998, French; December 1998, Spanish)	1920
6.	"Image and reality", booklet, new edition (January, English)	2003
7.	"UN in brief", booklet, new edition (July, all six official languages)	2020
8.	General Assembly press kit (August, English and French)	2055
9.	Annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, booklet (September, English, French and Spanish; October, Russian, Chinese and Arabic)	2058
10.	"United Nations conferences and observances", reference paper (February, English and French)	No. 38
11.	"Dynamics of United Nations reform felt system-wide", feature article (September, English and French)	2009
12.	"Staff become focus of United Nations modernization", feature article (November 1998, English, French and Spanish)	2018
13.	"UN briefing papers: the United Nations and human rights", booklet, reprint (January, English)	1998

* Dates given in months refer to 1999 unless otherwise indicated.

		DPI and/or Sales No.
14.	*Basic Facts about the United Nations*, reprint (September, English)	1920
15.	"Charter of the United Nations", booklet, reprint (August, Arabic and Russian)	511
16.	"The quotable Kofi Annan", booklet, second edition (September, English)	2059
17.	*World Concerns and the United Nations: Model Teaching Units for Primary, Secondary and Teacher Education* (December 1998, English)	E.98.I.9
18.	List of depository libraries receiving United Nations material (multilingual)	ST/LIB/12/Rev.16
19.	"Index to proceedings of the Security Council, 53rd year" (English)	ST/LIB/SER.B/S/35
20.	United Nations documents checklist, October 1996-December 1997 (English)	ST/LIB/SER.M/120
21.	*United Nations Documents Index*, vol. 1, No. 2 (English)	ST/LIB/SER.N/2
22.	*JUNIC Information Exchange Bulletin* (October and December 1998; and February, April and June)	
23.	*1999 JUNIC Directory* (April)	
24.	*1999-2000 Directory of Non-Governmental Organizations associated with the Department of Public Information*	2019

II. Thematic publications

A. Human rights

1.	"Human rights in action: field operations", Universal Declaration of Human Rights, background document (November 1998, English and French); available in Spanish on the Internet)	1937/H
2.	"UN action to combat intolerance and racism", background document (November 1998, English and French; available in Spanish on the Internet)	1937/I
3.	"Education: a tool", background document (November 1998, English and French; available in Spanish on the Internet)	1937/J
4.	"Human rights defenders: the front line struggle for human rights" background document (December 1998, English)	1937/K
5.	"Human rights fact sheet: 50 years of human rights" (December 1998, English)	1937/L

		DPI and/or Sales No.
6.	*Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Fiftieth Anniversary Bookmark*, reprint (November 1998, English/French)	1945
7.	"Fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", brochure (August 1998, English; October 1998, French and Spanish; November 1998, English reprint)	1967
8.	Convention on the Rights of the Child, reprint (November 1998, English)	1101/R.1
9.	"Decade of the World's Indigenous People", press kit cover (August, English)	2066

B. International Criminal Court

	"International Criminal Court: questions and answers" (October 1998, English and French)	2016

C. Peace and security

1.	"The Secretary-General on Kosovo", fact sheet (May)	
2.	"A comprehensive UN strategy for Kosovo", fact sheet (July)	
3.	"Algeria: report of Eminent Panel, July-August 1998", booklet (September, English and French)	2007
4.	Three background documents and fact sheets for the first meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (April, English, French and Portuguese)	
5.	"UNMIK: UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo: questions and answers" (August)	

D. Economic and social development

1.	*Development Business*, bi-monthly, Nos. 496-515 (English, Spanish, French and Portuguese)	
2.	*Development Update*, newsletter, Nos. 25 (October 1998), 26 (January), 27 (March) and 28 (June), released in English	1452
3.	"The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action", booklet, reprint (April, English)	1707
4.	"UN high-level meeting on globalization" (September 1998, English)	2008

		DPI and/or Sales No.
5.	"Special session of the United Nations General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", brochure (May, English; August, French)	2037
6.	Presentation of United Nations report entitled "Towards a new international financial architecture" (January, English)	
7.	"Secretary-General urges G8 to promote economic growth", press release, kit insert to Secretary-General's letter to the Group of 8 (May, English)	
8.	"United Nations position on global financial reform", fact sheet, kit insert to Secretary-General's letter to the Group of 8 (May, English)	
9.	"Combating world poverty: the fight has gotten tougher", fact sheet, kit insert to Secretary-General's letter to the Group of 8 (May, English)	
10.	"Economic and financial trends", fact sheet, kit insert to Secretary-General's letter to the Group of 8 (May, English)	
11.	"Slow growth world economy jeopardizes the poor, United Nations says", press release (June, English)	
12.	"National Y2K chiefs at the United Nations" (December 1998, English)	
13.	"Second global meeting of national Y2K coordinators at the United Nations on 22 June" (June, English)	2052
14.	"The United Nations and global commerce" booklet (August, English)	2039
15.	"The role of microcredit" background document (October 1998, English; April, French and Spanish)	2011
16.	"Changing the face of poverty", background document (October 1998, English; April, French and Spanish)	2013
17.	"Poverty: an obstacle to human rights", background document (April, English, French and Spanish)	2015
18.	"Global programme against money laundering", brochure (February, English; April, French; May, Spanish; August, Russian)	2010
19.	"HIV/AIDS, more than a health crisis", brochure (June, English; August, French)	2038
20.	"International Plan of Action on Ageing", booklet (September 1998, English)	932/Rev.1
21.	Guidelines for use of the logo of the International Year of Older Persons, 1999 (September 1998, English, French and Spanish)	1964/C

		DPI and/or Sales No.
22.	"1999 at a glance", background document (January, English; April, French and Spanish)	1964/D
23.	"Ageless thinking in the next millennium" background document (January, English; April, French and Spanish)	1964/E
24.	"Global life expectancy increases by 20 years", background document (January, English; April, French and Spanish)	1964/F
25.	"Demographics of ageing", background document (August, English)	1964/G
26.	"International Year of Older Persons 1999", multilingual poster (November 1998)	1992
27.	"International Year of Older Persons 1999", multilingual poster (September 1998; issued in cooperation with AARP)	2000
28.	"Headquarters launch of the International Year of Older Persons 1999", feature article (October 1998, English)	2017
29.	"End discrimination against women" (November 1998, English)	995/Rev.2
30.	"Forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women", background article (February, English)	1889/Rev.2
31.	"Ending discrimination: a fundamental right", information note for the twentieth anniversary of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (May, English)	2040
32.	"Past and present members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women", twentieth anniversary information note (May, English)	2041
33.	"CEDAW to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention", twentieth anniversary press release (May, English)	2042
34.	"Chairpersons of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women", twentieth anniversary information note (May, English)	2043
35.	"A short history of the Convention", twentieth anniversary information note (May, English)	2044
36.	"Commission on the Status of Women adopts Optional Protocol to the Convention", CEDAW twentieth anniversary information note (May, English)	2045
37.	"Text of the Optional Protocol to the Convention", twentieth anniversary information note (May, English)	2046

		DPI and/or Sales No.
38.	"CEDAW general recommendations", twentieth anniversary information note (May, English)	2047
39.	"List of States Parties", CEDAW twentieth anniversary information note (May, English)	2048
40.	"Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women", CEDAW twentieth anniversary information note (May, English)	2049
41.	"Women 2000", kit cover (June, English)	2035

E. Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (1997)

Eight background documents produced by UNIS Vienna, for release at Headquarters and around the world

F. Sustainable development

1.	"Special session of the General Assembly on small islands", brochure (April, English)	2027
2.	"Special session of the General Assembly on small islands", kit cover (July, English)	2050
3.	"Programme of action for Small Islands", booklet (August, English)	1609/Rev.1
4.	"Trouble in paradise: small islands struggle to preserve environments", background document (August, English)	2060
5.	"On trade and aid: small islands face economic crunch", background document (August, English)	2061
6.	"Small islands five years later: where do we stand?", fact sheet (August, English)	2062
7.	"Trade, environment issues to dominate special session on small islands", press release (August, English)	2063
8.	"Small island developing States and Territories: basic indicators", statistical table (August, English)	2064

G. Africa recovery

1. *Africa Recovery*, quarterly, vol. 12, No. 2 (November 1998, English; April, French); vol. 12, No. 3 (December 1998, English; July, French); vol. 12, No. 4 (April, English; July, French); vol. 13, No. 1 (June, English)

		DPI and/or Sales No.
2.	*United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa*, newsletter produced in conjunction with ECA, Issue No. 2 (November 1998)	
3.	*Economic Report on Africa 1999*, produced in conjunction with ECA (June)	

H. Fact sheets on the work of the United Nations

1.	"Setting the record straight: some facts about the United Nations", update (October 1998, English; February, French and Spanish; further revision, August, English)	1753/Rev.16-17
2.	"The United Nations: protecting the global environment", update (October 1998, English; February, French and Spanish; further revisions, August, English)	1814/Rev.5-6
3.	"The United Nations financial crisis at a glance", update (October 1998, English; February, French and Spanish; further revision, August, English)	1815/Rev.14-15
4.	"The United Nations and business: a global partnership", revision (August, English)	1820/Rev.2
5.	"United Nations conferences: what have they accomplished?", update (October 1998, English; February, French and Spanish; further revision, August, English)	1825/Rev.6-7
6.	"United Nations peacekeeping: some questions and answers", update (October 1998, English; February, French and Spanish; further revision, August, English)	1851/Rev.8-9
7.	"Setting the record straight: United Nations salaries and benefits", update (August 1998, English)	1891/Rev.2
8.	"Setting the record straight: what do Americans really think?", update (October 1998, English; February, French and Spanish; further revision, August, English)	1963/Rev.1
9.	"Setting the record straight: some facts about the United Nations", booklet compiling above fact sheets (October 1998, English; February, French and Spanish; further revision, August, English)	1848/Rev.4-5

I. Fact sheets issued in response to public inquiries and as part of the Department's school outreach programme

(All issued in English only)

1. "United Nations awards" (April)
2. "United Nations fellowships, scholarships, and grants" (April)

3. "United Nations Member States: a directory" (revised and updated, July)
4. "United Nations Headquarters" (revised and reissued, September 1998)
5. "United Nations Web site", brochure (July)
6. Student map of world population (July 1998)
7. "Role of the Secretary-General" (April)
8. "The General Assembly: what it is, what it does" (November 1998)
9. "How to set up a model United Nations" (November 1998)
10. "Three ways to help the United Nations" (July)
11. "International Day of Peace" (July)
12. "How to become a tour guide at the United Nations" (February)
13. "The United Nations role in combating terrorism" (October 1998)
14. "Female genital mutilation" (October 1998)
15. "United Nations policy on abortion" (February)
16. "The Secretary-General on Iraq" (February)

A promotional sticker entitled "Come to the United Nations, it's your world" was also issued for distribution to students.

III. Briefings for non-governmental organizations

1. Commemoration of the International Day of Older Persons and launch of the International Year of Older Persons (1 October 1998)
2. Overview of the fifty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly (8 October 1998)
3. Commemoration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (15 October 1998)
4. Global Action to Prevent War (22 October 1998)
5. Implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and new initiatives (29 October 1998)
6. Commemoration of the fifth annual Day for Freedom of Religion or Belief, on the theme "Freedom of religion or belief: hopes and realities" (5 November 1998)
7. Approaches to early childhood education (12 November 1998)
8. 2000: International Year of Thanksgiving (19 November 1998)
9. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations at 50: a reaffirmation of commitment (3 December 1998)
10. Universal ethics project (17 December 1998)
11. The global meeting of generations: visions and action for equitable development in the twenty-first century (7 January)
12. Families and technology (14 January)

13. UNICEF's annual report: *The State of the World's Children 1999* (21 January)
14. The world refugee situation: an update (28 January)
15. The Group of 77 Developing Countries and China: challenges for 1999 and beyond (4 February)
16. Improving accountability and transparency in governance: partnerships between international development organizations and NGOs (18 February)
17. Lifelong learning: the challenges of continuing and adult education (25 February)
18. Equality for women (4 March)
19. The demographics of ageing (11 March)
20. Women's right to health and development in the twenty-first century (18 March)
21. Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (25 March)
22. Update on population and development, in anticipation of the Special session of the General Assembly (1 April)
23. Issues before the Commission on Sustainable Development (8 April)
24. Report on global action to prevent war (15 April)
25. Eighth International Conference of the World Information Transfer (22 April)
26. Third United Nations Conference on Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) (29 April)
27. UNESCO World Science Conference (6 May)
28. UNICEF and NGOs: Cooperation for the education of young children (20 May)
29. Update on outcome of youth meetings, held at Portugal in August 1998 (27 May)
30. Commemoration of World Environment Day: population, consumption and resources (3 June)
31. Interdependence of generations: ability, not chronology (10 June; second in the series of "Age quake" debates)

IV. Video productions

1. "World chronicle", 39 thirty-minute panel talk shows released between 1 September 1998 and 31 August 1999 (Nos. 712-750)
2. "United Nations in action", 56 three-to-five-minute video news magazine items released in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish between 1 September 1998 and 31 August 1999 (Nos. 581-636)
3. "CNN world report", 67 two-and-a-half-minute news video items (56 made from "UN in Action" plus 11 specials), produced for CNN in English from 1 September 1998 to 31 August 1999
4. "Year in review 1998", a 15-minute video presenting highlights of United Nations activities during the year in all official languages
5. "Economic and Social Council presentational video", five-minute video on issues facing the Council, for screening at Geneva during the opening of the 1999 session

6. "Balkans humanitarian crisis", field mission to provide compilation B-roll for international television news syndicators and news magazine items on activities of the United Nations system relating to refugee crisis in the Balkans in 1999

7. "UN in Kosovo", field mission to provide compilation B-roll for international television news syndicators and news magazine items on United Nations activities in Kosovo in 1999

8. "Smalls arms in Albania", field mission to provide compilation B-roll for international televisions news syndicators and news magazine items on activities of the United Nations system in development projects in exchange for the handing in of small arms in Albania in 1999

9. "Compilation videos", regular provision of compilation B-roll video packages to international televisions news syndicators on thematic and news-related United Nations topics and material pertinent to major United Nations meetings

10. "Year of six billion", co-production with ZDF (Germany), UNICEF and UNFPA to provide five 45-minute documentaries for international distribution relating to the day in 1999 when the world population passes six billion

V. Special radio feature programmes/series

1. A special series of 12 features on population and development, produced on "Global population challenge: Cairo+5" in English and adapted into various non-official languages; released in English on cassettes and compact disks for worldwide distribution

2. The radio programme "UNESCO funds documentary on links between Calypso and high life music", in English, won a bronze medal award at the 1999 New York festivals

3. A series of 12 programmes on youth and development, in Arabic

4. Two 15-minute radio features entitled "The World Health Organization takes on tobacco" in English, Chinese and Kiswahili

5. Two 15-minute features on the world media in English

6. Two 15-minute features entitled "The year in review", in English, Chinese, French and Russian

7. Two 15-minute features, entitled "The International Year of Older Persons", in Chinese and Bahasa Indonesian

8. One feature on illegal drugs, in Turkish

9. Two 15-minute features entitled "Prospects for peace in East Timor", in English, Chinese, Hindi, Russian, Turkish and Urdu

10. A four-part series of 15-minute features entitled "A whole new world: the promise of poverty eradication for the Makushi in Guyana", in English and Dutch

11. Nine 15-minute features on the promotion and status of women's rights, in Arabic, English and Spanish

12. A feature entitled "Disarmament and non-nuclear proliferation", in Portuguese

13. Four 15-minute features, entitled "The Security Council and the crisis in Kosovo" in English, Russian, Portuguese and Turkish
14. Two 15-minute features on health and medicine, in Spanish
15. Two 15-minute features on global security, in Portuguese
16. Two 15-minute features on the state of the world's children, in Arabic
17. One 15-minute feature on the Lockerbie case, in French
18. Three 15-minute features on the human rights development report for 1999, in Arabic, English and Russian
19. Two 15-minute features on monitoring human rights in English and Turkish
20. One feature on controlling the spread of small arms, in Dutch
21. Three features on international population and development, in Chinese, Hindi and Bahasa Indonesian
22. Two 15-minute features entitled "The ethics of science", in English
23. One feature on the refugee crisis in the Balkans, in Kiswahili
24. Ten features on population and human rights, in Kiswahili and Turkish

VI. Electronic publishing

A. Department of Public Information publications on-line

1. *Development Business* on-line (<http://www.devbusiness.com>)
2. *UN Chronicle* (extracts) (<http://www.un.org.Pubs/chronicle>) (also posted in French)
3. *Africa Recovery* (<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec>) (also posted in French)
4. "UN in brief" (<www.un.org/Overview/brief.html>) (also posted in French and Spanish)
5. "Image and reality" (<www.un.org/geninfo/ir/chl_txt.htm>) (also posted in French and Spanish)
6. "UN briefing papers: The United Nations and human rights" (<www.un.org/rights/HRToday>) (also posted in French and Spanish)
7. "United Nations conferences and observances" (<www.un.org/events/ref38.htm>) (also posted in French)

B. Original output by the Department available only on the Internet

1. The United Nations Publications Web page: contains comprehensive information on products available for sale; has added French and Spanish titles to the complete listing of English titles available (http://www.un.org/publications)
2. The United Nations Bookshop Web page. Customers from around the world can visit the United Nations Bookshop and view a wide variety of products, including books, posters and gift items relating to the Organization and the many issues in which it is involved. (www.un.org/Pubs/bookshop)

3. Highlights of the noon briefings (http://www.un.org/news/ossg/hilites.htm)

4 CyberSchoolBus: United Nations interactive educational Internet site

C. Web page design/United Nations materials made available by the Department of Public Information on the Internet

1. Coverage of the Secretary-General's trips, press conferences, articles and statements

2. United Nations maps and geographic information resources

3. Coverage of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

4. Broadcast via the Internet of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council

5. Coverage of the special session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development, 30 June-2 July

6. New Web page of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

7. Web page for the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

8. Coverage of the second meeting of national Y2K coordinators

9. Bringing peace to Kosovo: Web page for the United Nations Mission in Kosovo

10. Web page for the United Nations Mission in East Timor

11. Web page for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

12. Web page for the International Day of Families

13. Fighting landmines: coverage of the first meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines, to give additional impetus to international assistance

14. Web page on International Women's Day 1999

15. 1998 Compendium of Security Council presidential statements and resolutions

16. New Web site: The United Nations and Civil Society and Business (launched in January)

17. Statements to the press: current matters (United Nations Radio)

18. Broadcast via the Internet of human rights events at United Nations Headquarters on 10 and 11 December 1998)

19. Web page on International Day of Disabled Persons

20. Web page on World AIDS Day

21. Third United Nations World Television Forum broadcast via the Internet

22. Launch of United Nations home pages in Arabic and Chinese

23. Web page on United Nations Day 1998

24. Directory of NGOs associated with the Department of Public Information

25. Web page on 50 years of United Nations peacekeeping

26. Web page on World Habitat Day 1998

27. Web page on International Day of Older Persons

D. On-line research tools of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library

1. "Documents alert", service to identify important United Nations documents, includes brief annotations (<http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/da>)

2. "UN-I-QUE" (United Nations Info Quest), database providing quick access to document symbols/sales numbers of selected United Nations materials from 1946 (<http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/unique>)

3. United Nations documentation research guide, updated daily, provides librarians and information professionals with an overview of the organization of United Nations documentation as well as the types of United Nations documents available on subjects of current interest, including women, human rights, rights of the child and torture (<http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide>)

4. United Nations system Pathfinder, guide to major reference sources and frequently requested reports issued by the United Nations and the specialized agencies (<http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/pathfind>)

5. Cartographic site, containing up-to-date peacekeeping maps, regional and country profile maps, as well as information on cartographic resources (<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic>)

E. Joint ventures

The Sales and Marketing Section of the Department of Public Information is cooperating with the International Civil Service Commission, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Information Technology Services Division to make available over the Internet a subscription-based service to the Daily Subsistence Allowance Rates, the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* and the Official Document Service (<http://www.un.org/Pubs/whatnew/electron.htm>).

VII. Other major activities at Headquarters

A. Public services

		Number
1.	Participants in guided tours at Headquarters, January-June	228 820
2.	Group briefings organized at Headquarters, January-June	
	Briefings	617
	Groups	218
	Participants	19 564
3.	Speaking engagements away from Headquarters organized by the Department of Public Information	

		Number
	Engagements, January-June	27
	Audience	4 340
3.	Queries from the public answered by the Public Inquiries Unit (January-June)	47 424

B. Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General

1.	Press conferences by Member States organized in 1998	276
2.	Press conferences/briefings by the Secretary-General and senior officials organized in 1998	
	Secretary-General	54
	Senior officials	220
3.	Interviews with the Secretary-General arranged in 1998 for media outlets representing all regions	126

C. Sales and Marketing Section

1.	Promotional output, September 1998-September 1999	
	Promotional publication catalogues for human rights, Spanish language publications, and United Nations University publications produced and mailed	
	Sales brochures produced on education, world economics, Model United Nations, electronic publications, population, disarmament, terminology and development	20
	Displays of United Nations publications coordinated at major book fairs worldwide	15
	Advertisements placed in key professional and academic journals	75
2.	Cooperative distribution arrangements to sell publications undertaken with UNU, UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP, INSTRAW, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNIDO, UNHCR and IOM	

D. Dag Hammarskjöld Library, January-June

1.	United Nations depository libraries around the world	373
2.	Exchange arrangements with institutions worldwide, as of 30 June	1 232
3.	United Nations documents and publications acquired by the Library	89 519

		Number
4.	Specialized agency documents and publications acquired	5 057
5.	External materials acquired	39 118
6.	Electronic resources in the Library (number of databases)	165
7.	Records added to UNBIS	17 844
8.	Missions, Governments, intergovernmental offices with on-line access to UNBIS, as of 30 June	125
9.	Library group training sessions on Internet, United Nations documentation	90
10.	Digitized documents uploaded to the optical disk system	2 316
11.	Reference queries	26 045
12.	Loans processed	35 244
13.	Materials photocopied for Library users (number of pages)	352 255
14.	New maps prepared	20
15.	New peacekeeping maps prepared	1
16.	Revised state, regional, world maps	10
17.	Revised peacekeeping maps	27
18.	Provision of black and white prints and film negatives for reproduction	325
19.	Provision of large format colour plots for briefings	146
20.	Provision of colour copy maps for meetings etc.	437
21.	Provision of digital files maps	188
22.	Provision of maps for reprinting by external publishers	13

E. Radio output, September 1998-September 1999

1.	Radio news magazines	587
2.	Radio features/regional news magazines	1 177
3.	Radio telephone feeds	1 524 news updates/ programmes
4.	Radio bulletins and news magazines on electronic bulletin board (English/French/Spanish)	753
5.	Radio programmes disseminated on the Internet (Chinese/English/French/Russian)	312
6.	Radio programmes posted on the Internet	
	English, French and Spanish daily news	753

		Number
	Weekly Chinese news and "World in review" in English	104
	Two feature programmes in Arabic	64
	Weekly features (Chinese/English)	208
	"Women", "Scope", "Perspective" and "Huayu zhuanti jiemu"	

F. United Nations Television, January-August

1.	Bookings	
	Events covered	639
	In-house services (dubbing, mixing, narrating etc.)	879
	Services to outsiders (broadcasters, correspondents)	230
	Total bookings	1 748
2.	Requests	
	Number of tape requests	140
	Number of tapes duplicated	184
3.	Service to syndicators	
	Feeds	1 743
	Packages	947

G. Audio-visual

	Audio	
	Events covered	1 426
	Incoming materials	
	Feeds	240
	Interviews	130
	Radio programmes	1 645
	Dubs	11 512
1.	Loans	2 992
2.	Visual	
	Number of requests (including research)	309
	Number of video tape duplications (excluding film transfers done by an outside film lab)	504
	Number of events/productions logged	995

		Number
H.	**Photographic**	
1.	Number of photo postings	236
2.	Number of photos downloaded from United Nations Web site	882 765
3.	Customer requests	775
4.	Pieces distributed	
5.	Rolls	1 276
	Secretary-General's trips	137
	Secretary-General — other coverage	217
	Field	7
	United Nations meetings	477
	Other events	437
6.	Photos added to photo library	1 318
I.	**Promotion/distribution**	
1.	Radio	
	Audio cassettes	64 400
	Audio tapes	4 928
2.	Video and promotional materials	
	TV/video catalogues distributed	2 000
	Brochures/colour leaflets, booklets	20 000
	Loaned videos	48
	Videos (screened in-house)	32
	Video programmes distributed	12 152
	Satellite programmes (150 million households)	2
3.	"Daily highlights", September 1998-31 August 1999	246
4.	Press releases produced in English, January-August	1 299
5.	Press releases produced in French, January-August	1 048
6.	Coverage of briefings, January-August	272
7.	Permanent accreditation of correspondents processed, January-June	1 026
8.	Temporary accreditation of correspondents processed, January-June	2 065